



JD



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

9 September, 1982

*Dear Mr. Pabell.*

Thank you for your letter of 22 August about Exocet missiles and Argentina.

Your first point concerns the allegation in the 'Sunday Times' that French technicians helped the Argentinian armed forces prepare Exocet missiles for use against the Falklands Task Force. As I made clear in my letter of 4 August, there is not a great deal more I can say on this subject. Following the 'Sunday Times' article of 27 July we asked the French Government for an explanation. The French Minister of Defence immediately ordered an urgent investigation. The outcome was a joint statement by the French Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs confirming that the Aerospatiale/Dassault technicians had properly carried out the French Government's specific instructions not to assist the Argentines in the event of armed conflict between Britain and Argentina. That statement was quite unequivocal: an investigation had shown the newspaper allegations to be unfounded. There is no evidence available to us to support a contrary view.

Your second point relates to further French arms sales to Argentina. As you rightly say, the French Government has removed the embargo it placed on deliveries of weapons to Argentina during the Falklands conflict. I believe this to have been premature in a situation where Argentina has yet formally to declare

/ hostilities

*SW*

hostilities at an end; and we have told the French so. They have indicated that they will continue to exercise restraint over deliveries of sensitive equipment. We shall continue to do everything possible to persuade our friends and allies to maintain an effective embargo on supplies of military equipment to Argentina.

Yours sincerely  
Raymond Beckett

---

Tam Dalyell, Esq., M.P.